



Spark Gap

Vol. 36, Issue 10, October 2020 *MARC - Serving Central Indiana Communities for thirty-six years*

MARC Meetings Stay Safe

As we swing into fall it seems like our home for the holidays will be the sally port at the Prosecutors office in Franklin. To date this has been a good alternative to the REMC HQ brick and mortar place to meet the third Saturday of each month.

Sporting protective masks while sitting a safe distance growing number of MARC club members are using to attend the face to face club meetings.



apart a
caution

Thanks
to
repeater
trustee
Chris

Frederick, KQ9Y, we have successfully used a two-radio system to simultaneously broadcast the in-person meeting to all club members listening from the safety of their ham shack.

Jackie Frederick, KI6QOG and the other club officers base radio to transmit while Chris, KQ9Y, works the using a portable radio, leading to a mag mounted on a stepladder outside the garage. He then stretches mic cord to engage the garage attendees on site.



The good news is after the Covid-health restrictions have lifted the club will return to the REMC meeting room. We are scheduled to meet there at 8 am the third Saturday each month through **September 2021**. Upon our return to the REMC meeting room MARC meetings will feature regular guest speakers with VE testing sessions to follow. Everyone is looking forward to a sense of normal in the near future. In the meantime, monitor your club repeater 146.835 daily. You can communicate mask free.



use the
crowd
antenna
a long

that
19

been

Pictures and story by Jack -w8ish



Whether this makes more sense than “Edward, Tango, Zebra” is up to you.

“The story goes that it started with semaphore relay stations,” says Brian Kelk, a computer scientist who’s worked at Cambridge University and who maintains an exhaustive page about [spelling alphabets](#). He’s not a linguist or anything; he just says he happens to be fascinated by this stuff.

“Someone would be watching incoming signals and shouting out letters to someone sending outgoing. They invented phonetics for some troublesome letters,” he says. The British military came up with the first few examples, just for letters they found the most difficult: “P as in pip,” “B as in beer.” Those were set down in regulations in 1904. Between then and the end of World War II, the British, the Americans, and various telecommunications companies kept working on these alphabets, producing dozens of standards.

Just as the names of letters are in groups, spelling alphabets also might have some sense of thematic organization. “We remember better things which are linked in terms of their meaning,” says Valerie Hazan, a professor of speech sciences at University College London. (We’ll be hearing a lot more from her.) Geographic place names are one group. From the 1912 Western Union Spelling Alphabet, just for example, we have “B as in Boston,” “N as in Newark,” and “T as in Texas.”

First names are another group. From the 1917 Royal Navy telephonic alphabet: “G as in George,” “W as in Willie,” “E as in Edward.” And, bizarrely, dances show up as a group: “F as in Foxtrot,” “T as in Tango,” “J as in Jig.”

For about 80 years, governments and corporations futzed with these spelling alphabets, and learned that some stuff didn’t work—it turns out, for example, that “Lima” is also the Malay word for the number five. A tremendous amount of research, time, and money was invested into figuring out the optimal spelling alphabet—at least for the three languages that the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO, the United Nations agency that handles air transportation) felt significant enough to have one (English, French, and Spanish). The ICAO scrambled, using researchers across the globe on the problem, and by 1959 had finalized what is today probably the best-known spelling alphabet: Alfa, Bravo, Charlie, Delta, Echo, and so on. (As a side note: “Alfa” is not a typo. The whole “ph equals f” thing is confusing, and reasonably so, for non-English speakers. The same goes for the alphabet’s J—Juliett with a doubled final letter so the French won’t say “Juliay.”)

A tremendous amount of research, time, and money was invested into figuring out the optimal spelling alphabet.

That is the now the standard alphabet for organizations including NATO (which often lends its name to the alphabet), the Federal Aviation Administration of the United States, the International Amateur Radio Union, and pretty much any international group that wants or needs a standard. It’s certainly the most commonly used spelling alphabet in the world, but it is, as most of these alphabets are, exceedingly Anglocentric.

Other languages have come up with their own spelling alphabets. Some needed wholly new ones, such as Russian, which uses the Cyrillic alphabet. “Г as in Григóрий” is the Russian version of “G as in Gregory.” Japanese and Mandarin Chinese both have their own letter-based alphabets (Kana and Pinyin, respectively) in addition to their traditional logographic alphabets (in which symbols stand in for whole words or phrases, rather than just sounds). Those letter-based alphabets, in turn, have their own spelling alphabets.

Some languages that use the Roman alphabet, as English does, have letters of their own. Take Æ in Danish and Norwegian, which is usually given “Æ as in Ægir,” a figure from Norse mythology. Spanish has the Ñ, though precious few words start with it. Despite that, most people go with “Ñ as in Ñoño,” which means “dull.”

English was the first language to have these spelling alphabets, so perhaps that’s why other languages

follow its general outline and themes. Most spelling alphabets around the world are still based on place names and given names: (the equivalent of) “と as in Tokyo,” “Δ as in Demetrios,” or “И as in Ivan.” But by around the late 1960s, things had calcified. The official or widely accepted spelling alphabets were set. Yet here we are, in 2019, with an actual need for a new one.

Voice call quality has gone down over the past two decades. Mobile phones have added convenience and a million other things, but they have done away with a wired network dedicated solely to voice communication, as well as the large microphones and speakers of old landlines, which featured decades of refinements to improve call quality. Cell phones, on the other hand, rely on tiny, awful microphones, and tiny, awful speakers for calls, and tiny, awful allocations of bandwidth. Mobile networks can be compromised by everything from streaming video, to the presence of a tree or wall, to the weather. Most importantly, they’ve dropped the emphasis on voice quality. Nobody seems to care any more whether they can hear a pin drop.

Sure, much communication has moved over to text, email, and social platforms, but everyone still needs to talk on the phone sometimes. English is such a widely spoken language that it comes in many different flavors, dialects, and accents, which further complicates understanding people clearly over a shoddy mobile connection. Independent of their use in military and aviation capacities, we sort of need spelling alphabets now more than ever. The problem is that what we’ve been given by the 50-year-old standard is deeply flawed for modern use

For more information and the rest of this article please visit the web site:

☐ https://getpocket.com/explore/item/it-might-be-time-to-update-the-old-alfa-bravo-charlie-spelling-alphabet?utm_source=pocket-newtab

..... *Thanks Chris, KQ9Y for finding this interesting article. October 2020*



W9HR's VHF/UHF Station

My VHF/UHF station consists of the following components:

- Yaesu FT-7900 Dual Band FM Transceiver
- Tekpower TP30SWII Switching Mode DC regulated power supply
- Signalink Terminal Node Controller
- Kenwood external speaker for radio audio
- BKnight external speaker for Signalink monitor
- MacBook Pro with Audacity for playing Amateur Radio Newsline
- Cellphone on stand for digital time display

I use this rig for general QSOs, ARES check-ins and when I operate as Net Control for the Sunday evening MARC ARES net.

I normally transmit at 20 watts but could go to the full 50 watts if needed. I generally get good signal reports on local repeaters.

I use the Signalink TNC to connect my laptop to the radio for Amateur Radio Newsline transmission while operating as Net Control. I like this setup because the radio is capable of accepting a PTT signal from the Signalink, rather than the more problematic VOX method.

I use a freeware program called *Audacity* to play Newsline on my MacBook Pro. It works well but requires some diligence as it is easy to inadvertently press the wrong button from the plethora of closely spaced program controls.



I built a 10-foot PVC pipe mast that is attached to a board that I attached to one of the 5"x5" posts on my elevated deck. From the mast, I go up another 5 feet with my 2m/70cm antenna. That gets the tip of my antenna about 25 feet above the patio below.

I drilled four holes in the board that I attached the mast to. I pre-painted it to match the post stain. I then attached the board and mast setup to the post using four threaded studs and wing nuts. That gives me the flexibility to easily take it down or move the setup to another post by merely undoing the wing nuts and refastening to another post with threaded studs. In hindsight, I probably should have drilled a hole in the mast and tucked the coax inside for a neater look. That's a project for another day.



I also have a couple of HF rigs, a home brew HF mast and dipole, a portable VHF/UHF cross-band repeater and emergency power options. I will leave those for another discussion.

73,
Doug W9HR

ARRL National Convention and Orlando HamCation® Postponed to February 2022

ARRL and the Orlando Amateur Radio Club (OARC) have announced that the ARRL National Convention and Orlando [HamCation®](#) -- which was to host the convention -- have been postponed until February 10 - 13, 2022. The convention had been set for next February.

"The joint decision came after considering the national public health emergency including the health and safety of all participants, the uncertainty that continues to impact our organizations, and the reluctance to travel to, and attend, large events," said ARRL CEO David Minster, NA2AA. "We regret the disruption to the hard work already completed by so many volunteers preparing for the ARRL National Convention and HamCation."

"While postponing was a difficult decision, our top priority is delivering a safe and successful HamCation experience for everyone, including our attendees, dedicated volunteers, exhibitors, and service partners," said HamCation General Chairman Michael Cauley, W4MCA.

OARC President John Knott, N4JTK, noted that holding the convention in 2022 will mark the 75th anniversary of HamCation -- one of the largest annually held gatherings of radio amateurs in the US. The published gate figure for 2020 was 24,200 for all 3 days.

"We want our diamond anniversary show to be an exciting, five-star event," said Knott. "We look forward to seeing you in Orlando in 2022, and hope that you and your loved ones remain safe in the months to come."

A full day of National Convention programming and training sessions was previously scheduled to precede HamCation. That will be rescheduled for Thursday, February 10, 2022. HamCation will host the rest of the convention on Friday, Saturday, and Sunday, February 11 -13, 2022 at the Central Florida Fairgrounds & Expo Park in Orlando.

Cauley said HamCation may organize some online presentations and programs for what would have been HamCation 2021 next February. A QSO party is also under consideration. The [HamCation website](#) will soon post details, including information for anyone seeking refunds and other options for pre-purchased tickets and exhibit space. You can follow HamCation on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), and [Instagram](#). Further details and any changes will be shared via the [2022 ARRL National Convention](#) and [Orlando HamCation](#) websites.

..... *ARRL News October 2020*

2-Meter FM Goes *VERSATILE...*



FM20BM \$235
Regulated AC Power
Supply and 20-Watt
RF Amplifier



FM20M \$150
Snap-On 20-Watt
Mobile RF Amplifier



FDFM-2 \$250
Deluxe 2-Watt,
Six-Channel
FM Transceiver



BP-1 \$12.95
Snap-On Portable
Battery Pack



PS-1500 \$44.95
Regulated AC
Power Supply

You bet! See the complete package
at your local dealers.

Inoue Communications Equipment Corporation

VARITRONICS INCORPORATED

3835 North 32nd Street • Suite 6 • Phoenix, Arizona 85018

Dealer Inquiries Invited

See Us at the Southwest Division Convention in San Diego.

october 1969  19

Ham Radio advertisement 1969.

RED TOUCHES YELLOW,
WHICH I THINK MEANS
THIS IS A 24Ω SNAKE.



I just saved a
bunch of money
on feedline by
mounting my
antenna lower.





MID-STATE AMATEUR RADIO CLUB

The Mid-State Amateur Radio Club meets the **THIRD SATURDAY** of each month at the Johnson County REMC 750 International Drive Franklin, IN 46131.

See our website, www.midstatehams.org, for maps on how to get to our meeting.

Everyone is welcome; you do not have to be a *HAM* to attend our meetings or a member of the club.

W9MID Repeater:

146.835/
146.235 MHz
(151.4 Hz PL Tone)

Club Officers:

President: Tim Aldridge - WC9G
Vice President: Jacki Frederick – KI6QOG
Secretary: Chris Read – W9OQ
Treasurer: Chris Mazzarella – KC9VGQ
Repeater Trustee - Chris Frederick – KQ9Y

W9MID Repeater:

443.525/
448.525 MHz
(151.4 Hz PL Tone)

Weekly Net: Sunday evening 7:00 PM ARES/RACES members and ALL RADIO AMATEURS
146.835/146.235 MHz (151.4 Hz PL Tone)

The Official Newsletter of the Mid-State Amateur Radio Club

P.O. Box 836
Franklin, Indiana
46131

Spark Gap Editor: Robert LaGrange N9SIU

Please send your articles to my email: n9siu@yahoo.com no later than the 2nd week of the month.



Special thanks to Johnson County REMC for the use of their community room for meetings and testing.